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DOE Presents “Star of Excellence” Safety Award to Savannah River Site Contractor

AIKEN, S.C. - U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) recently awarded its Voluntary Protection Program “Star of Excellence” to Savannah River Nuclear Solutions for 2010.

“Time and again Savannah River Nuclear Solutions has proven how highly they value employee safety,” said Inés Triay, Ph.D., DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management. “We recognize that their safety culture is one to be appreciated and imitated.”

The DOE Voluntary Protection Program mirrors a similar program managed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The purpose of the program is to recognize contractor organizations that have maintained successful safety and health programs.

“We are pleased to recognize Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, the SRS management and operating contractor, for its safety commitment and performance,” said Jack Craig, Acting Manager, DOE’s Savannah River Operations Office at SRS. “This is the second consecutive year that they have received this prestigious recognition, and we thank them for their commitment to safety and their service to our nation. Congratulations to all SRNS employees.”

In order to be recognized as a participant in the DOE Voluntary Protection Program (VPP), a contractor must demonstrate excellence in the following safety program areas: management leadership, employee involvement, worksite analysis, hazard prevention and control, and safety and health training.

SRNS President & CEO Garry Flowers said that the VPP awards demonstrate his company’s continued commitment to safe operations. “The Savannah River Site has an enviable safety heritage and SRNS is proud to play an essential role in building on that heritage and ensuring that our employees remain focused on safety in everything we do,” said Flowers. “DOE’s Star of Excellence recognition affirms our belief that safety is an imperative.”

The Star of Excellence award is given to those sites demonstrating excellence in safety performance (OSHA recordable rates at least 75 percent lower than industry standards) and excelling by performing outreach efforts to other sites. Over the years, SRNS and previous operating contractors at SRS have met those milestones by logging the lowest OSHA recordable rates in their history and by entering into agreements to mentor other sites.

One of the larger organizations to benefit from this mentoring service was Warner Robins Air Force Base, near Macon, Ga.

“The mentoring, expertise and guidance from the VPP Team have been outstanding. We have made excellent progress with our efforts,” said Bradley Heithold, Brigadier General, USAF, Vice Commander, in a letter commending the site’s VPP Team. “Your team members are professional in every aspect, and we appreciate their mentoring and partnering.”

Out of the thousands of businesses found throughout South Carolina each year, the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance (SCMA) undertakes a comprehensive study to develop a short list of those businesses deserving special recognition for exceptional safety programs.

“We believe our goal of zero injuries is obtainable,” said Flowers. “We don’t assume ... we know one day we will achieve that goal.”

Additional information on the Department of Energy’s Office of Environmental Management and the Savannah River Site can be found at <http://www.em.doe.gov> or <http://www.srs.gov>.

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